1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

supporting Greek version of "Standing on the Corner, Watching All the Girls Go By."

Or, in Northern Greece and the Grammos Mountains, one would find in the village of Kotili, with about six hundred people, that there were two shops which sold cigarettes and coffee.[2] A score of the men, in addition to being farmers and shepherds, were woodworkers; another score were masons, and one was a cobbler. That represented the specialization of that village, since all the other men were farmers-shepherds-laborers. But it is at coffeehouses such as those in Kotili, close by the border, that one gains an insight into the real meaning of Balkan politics. For here the older villagers will tell the visitor of the days back in the first decade of the century when Bulgarian *komitadjis,* while the area was still under Turkey, came to try to persuade the people to join the Bulgarian cause. But the people remained loyal to the orders of their church authorities and resisted the efforts of the Bulgarians to enroll their local children in special schools or to enlist the adults in a premature revolt against the Turks. As one listens to the stories of violence and national struggle, the surrounding mountains which at first seemed peaceful begin to assume a brooding look. And one learns that national traditions are preserved and passed on in the coffeehouse, with the old men telling the eager young men of the price that was paid to keep them Greek.

Vamvakia, on the Serrai plains, provides a final illustration of the combined variety shop–coffeehouse.[3] This village, too, numbers about six hundred people and has as its only business a cheese-making establishment and three coffeehouses. There is also one carriage maker who farms as well. The merchandise for the shops is brought from Serrai by the bus driver, who takes in the orders and brings back the supplies for a small fee. These coffeehouses are of brick and clay-mud construction and have the usual equipment of small tables and chairs. Two of them have battery radios for the entertainment of the customers. Coffee is the usual beverage, while ouzo and soda drinks (in summer) are also popular. Spoon sweets, such as vanilla or fruit preserves, are often sold.

We may conclude, therefore, that in most villagers of less than a thousand people one will generally find coffeehouses of the combined variety-shop type. Although the women may now and then view them as shops, the men almost invariably think of them as coffeehouses. This social function outweighs any economic function they might possess.

As size increases, say to more than a thousand people, the variety shops and grocery stores become separate establishments and the coffeehouse devotes itself almost exclusively to serving beverages. This is what most Greeks would consider the typical village coffeehouse, although the relative numbers of each kind are not known.

The specialized coffeehouses can frequently accommodate fifty to seventy

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[The Village Coffeehouse]

275 443 [427] people without any great difficulty. Many of the buildings are rented by the proprietors either from some owner who built them as an investment or from the community, which derives income from the structure. In a Macedonian village of Kimine, twenty-four miles from Salonica, there are three coffeehouses:

●[403] All have adequate furniture, little tables and chairs being the standard coffeehouse equipment. All are fortunate to have battery radios also. . . . The largest coffeehouse is a community building and is rented from the community. Most of the village's middle-aged men frequent here. . . . The second coffeehouse is also rented, this time from a private owner. This coffeehouse is smaller and much neater than the previous one. Here we usually find the old men of the village, sitting around and quietly drinking and talking. The third coffeehouse is the meeting place of all the younger men in the village. This is a new building, pleasant and big.[4]

275 369 443 [562] [273] The third type of coffeehouse, found much more frequently where urban influences are strong, seldom sells ouzo and other alcoholic drinks, not because of any temperance drives, but because it caters to those who prefer coffee and an occasional sweet. This type is much more apt to be patronized by women, often in the company of a husband or father. Elsewhere in the village or town will be found *tavernas*, where wine — often that produced by the owner for his own clientele — is served in an outside courtyard with food. Many travelers to Greece have commented on the moderate use of alcoholic beverages in that country and have often pointed out that they never saw more than one or two drunk people during their whole sojourn.

But all three types of coffeehouses — the combined variety shop, the drink emporium, where liquor is served as well as coffee, and the urban type where only coffee is served — are important for reasons other than what is consumed. That is secondary, for many villagers visit a coffeehouse without buying a single drink or sweet.

Coffeehouse Attractions

275 521 208 [571] As I sat in scores of Greek coffeehouses I wondered, in looking around me, why these particular men were present at this time and what the rest of the village men were doing. I also tried to find out why certain men, perhaps five or six, were talking to each other around one table while another five or six were in earnest conversation around another table. And here and there I would find a smaller group of two or three seriously intent upon some point of discussion. What formed the nucleus of each group? Did the same people tend to cluster together each time they came to the coffeehouse? This was more than idle curiosity on my part, for I knew that the answer to such questions would reveal a great deal about how public opinion was formed in the village, opinion which in turn would be directly related to Greek national policy and even to Greek-American relations. In